

Identifying the influence of training policies on employee performance in the county government of Nyandarua

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the relationship between training policies and the performance of employees in the County Government of Nyandarua. The study used a descriptive survey research design. The 66 county administrators at Nyandarua County Government were the survey's main target. The main tool for gathering data was a questionnaire. The metrics of central tendency and dispersion, the absolute and relative frequencies, and percentages of each were used in descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, respectively. The data was shown using frequency tables and graphs for simple comparison. Training policies and employee performance showed a coefficient of regression $\beta_1 = 0.319$, $p\text{-value} = 0.022 < 0.05$. This was clearly manifested in that training lowers staff turnover, absenteeism, dissatisfaction and discontent, as well as boosting morale and increasing productivity. This was shown by workers' ability to realise they all have an equal chance of succeeding; it is easier for them to give their all at work. In conclusion, through training, organisations can attain management development, boosting managerial capability, stimulating and helping retain competent managers and encouraging managers to pursue professional advancement. The study recommends that the county government should ensure they establish sound training policies so as to equip the employees with the adequate skill set and capacity to deliver quality services to the citizens.

Key terms: Employee performance, managerial capability, professional advancement, quality services, training policies.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, workers show the desire to pursue more than one employment in an attempt to exploit opportunities for employment from which they can expand their interests, personalities, and abilities. In addition to getting payment and assets for their jobs, employees' loyalty to the institutions where they work is highly attributed to the extent to which they are satisfied by their employer (Bartlett, 2012). Employees who raise their standard of living require more than simply a job to be happy. Their chosen profession is one that may take into account their passions, personalities, skills, and compatibility with their overall situation in life. It is disappointing to observe that the majority of businesses are unaware that the working environment they build does not prioritise giving their employees opportunities to advance their careers (Nzuve, 2007). It is important to formulate career development policies that are clear to both the organisation and its employees (Armstrong, 2001). The employees' career implementation in a skilful and dedicated manner enhances the organisational development. Through the qualification of employees and continuous capacity building, they become competitive, giving them opportunities to be rewarded or even promoted. This is in line with Graham and Bennett (2005), who contend that for the development of a career, employees might be appointed to higher posts and with expanded responsibilities within the organisation or even move to another, more competitive organisation. In some instances, after attainment of recognisable skills, an employee can join another organisation better than the previous one and also rise from one rank to another depending on the available opportunities (Robbins, 2010).

Career development is widely used to close the skill gaps between projected future outcomes and present performance. Although many workers in the public sector have received training, there is little indication that their careers have advanced. This could be a result of poor training needs assessment and skill placement. The efficiency of public sector employees has drawn grave concerns from the Kenyan government, civil society, international donors, and the population. There has been a general environment of subpar work performance and bad service delivery at the workplace. The reduction in providing efficient and

effective facilities in the civil service is a result of poor work performance. The clients, citizenry, and general populace of the 21st century are more aware of their rights and demand better services from the government. Therefore, the development and management of the employees is potentially an effective tool that the County governments, including Nyandarua County, can use to gain a strategic advantage and motivate their employees to enhance their performance, hence satisfying the expectations of the communities and residents of the County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Training Policies and Employee Performance

The four primary elements which were provided to keep personnel productive and motivated were training and development, exciting and demanding tasks, autonomy for creative problem-solving, and career stability, according to Samwel and Chipuza (2009) in research of four South African businesses. A second study on the same subject, *training the professional staff: A descriptive study of training approaches in island companies dealing in software*, presented the findings of a survey of 199 staff members after considering 40 companies dealing in software. The survey collected data for various types of training offered and their impact on retaining knowledge. Both the final outcomes showed that training aligned well with employee expectations and performance. Positive training initiatives increase workers' task satisfaction. About one-third of the surveyed believe that their company's training is not structured according to employee feedback on the skills needed. This, therefore, means that training needs assessment and identification of skill gaps were not responsive to employees' needs.

A research on the incentives of health workers' retention in Kenya: *An Evaluation of Existing Practice*, Keraro (2014) underlined that inducements are not just financial in nature. According to the comments they obtained from health professionals, non-financial incentives, including better functioning circumstances, education and development possibilities for their families, decent living conditions, communication, and good living conditions, were highly valued.

In a study in the telecommunications industry, Hasan (2013) found that businesses should encourage the

practice of offering incentives to increase employee enthusiasm and commitment. Workers are offered a setting where they can pursue career progression and professional skill development in this way. Over the other two job training options, employees favour on-the-job training. The length of the training is also important for providing the employees with training-related benefits. Employee excitement can be increased with the help of supervisory support. Every firm should take work training into account in their professional behaviour because it inspires personnel. Organisations need skilled and productive workers to obtain and sustain competitive advantage, and for their capabilities to grow and be strengthened, these workers require career development (Prince, 2004).

The main goal of on-the-job training is to improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward job-related tasks. This is one of the main factors that can create short-term and long-term benefits for individuals and businesses. The benefits of training are many, such as high morale—trained employees feel more confident and motivated—and reduced production and training costs. Risks are avoided because trained employees can use materials and equipment more efficiently and cost-effectively, thereby reducing and eliminating waste; reduce employee turnover—training gives employees a sense of security in the workplace, helping to prevent employee turnover and absenteeism; helps manage change—training helps manage change by improving employee understanding and engagement in the change process, and providing them with the skills and abilities needed to adapt and respond to new situations; provide recognition, increased responsibility, and opportunities for pay increases and promotions; contribute to improving the accessibility and quality of staff.

One of the most significant advantages of training is that it can create long-term and short-term advantages for people and businesses. According to Cole (2002), there are a number of benefits that come from training, including improved morale: employees who are trained are more confident and motivated. This can result in increased motivation and productivity. Reduced cost of production and training: training reduces risks because employees are more likely to use the same materials and equipment over

and over again, thus reducing and eliminating waste. Reduce staff turnover: employees who receive training feel more secure in the workplace and are less likely to leave. This can help reduce absenteeism. Change management style: training helps manage change by making employees better understand and participate in the change process and providing them with the skills and abilities needed to adapt to new situations. Benefits from increased recognition and accountability: employees may be offered higher salaries and promotions, as well as have greater access to quality staff.

Also, there was a substantial link between the development of career opportunities and the retaining of employees ($r = 0.390$, $P 0.00$), indicating that these two factors have a major impact on retention. As a result, it was advised that the organisation's management provide opportunities for development, according to a study by Kwenin (2013) on how the work environment is related to employee retention and development of career opportunities that was conducted in Vodafone, Ghana Limited. Education and career advancement are found to be positively correlated. According to Baruch and Leeming (2001), organisations need skilled and productive workers for the purpose of obtaining and sustaining competitive advantage, while these employees require career development to strengthen and cultivate their qualifications. Businesses need bright and productive employees to establish and maintain a competitive edge, and the employees require career adjustment to broaden their skill sets. Also, there was a substantive association between career development opportunities and employee retention ($r = 0.390$, $P 0.000$), indicating that these two factors have a major impact on retention. According to Kwenin's (2013) study conducted at Vodafone Ghana Limited on the relationship between work setting, potential for career development, and employee retention, management should offer chances to advance their education, skills, and knowledge for improved and effective service delivery and enhanced productivity. According to Leeming (2013), there is a favourable correlation between education and professional advancement.

Zheng (2009) found a strong correlation between training and employee performance in various tasks.

Employees who were trained were more likely to complete various tasks and vice versa. Training had a direct impact on employee performance. In simple terms, training is a formal, systematic change in behaviour through learning resulting from training, instruction, education, development, or planned experience. Because training is so important in practice, it is important to train efficiently. More expensive but effective training saves money from wasting money on cheaper but ineffective training. This is why training has strategic value for hotels. Service quality depends on employee customer service effectiveness.

According to Armstrong (2000), trained employees work better as a team because they know what is expected of them and are able to deliver it together seamlessly. He further states that employees who are trained are more self-assured in their ability to perform and make decisions. They are also more likely to be open to change and to come up with innovative solutions. Employees who are trained in new skills tend to be good candidates for promotion because they have demonstrated their capacity to learn, remember, and apply information. Similarly, reliable, qualified employees can be empowered to teach other employees, which relieves pressure on management teams. However, according to the ongoing situation at Mumias Sugar Company, employees are not as motivated, and many of them have been without salaries for over seven months due to the rampant corruption within the organisation, regardless of whether the company had initially implemented training programmes for the development of its employees through the company training centre (Wanjala, 2015).

Training at the workplace is essential for any organisation that wants to grow, improve operational efficiency, increase productivity, and be in a position to compete and remain at the top of the market. There is a strong correlation between the number of employees who are trained and the number of employees who are not trained (Evans, 1999). Any organisation that wants to make money for its shareholders and provide quality services to its customers and beneficiaries needs to invest in training its employees at the workplace to humanise their abilities and knowledge. This study is necessary

because Wanjala's (2015) study found that at Mumias Sugar Company, most unskilled workers were promoted to positions requiring specific skills with specific tasks. Some cane-cutters even find themselves in positions that require such high skills that on-the-job training is necessary. This includes training and development of the workforce and managers (Briscoe, 1995).

Training and development are frequently used to bridge the gap between present performances and expected future performance. Training and development are part of the HRD function, which is considered an important function of HRM (Weil & Woodall, 2005). The functional activities of this function include identifying training and development needs, selecting appropriate methods and programs to meet these needs, planning implementation, and finally evaluating their results (McCourt & Derek, 2003). It does not help that as researchers continue to attract interest in the field of training research, they continue to emphasise its importance. Some of these scholars argue that the recognition of the relevance of training in recent years has been greatly influenced by increased competition and the relative success of investment-intensive organisations in employee development (Baker, 2006). Related to the above, Baker (2006) added that technological developments and organisational changes have gradually led some employers to realise that success depends on the skills and abilities of their employees, thus requiring investment, significant and ongoing training and development investment.

On-the-job training has long been recognised as one of the key functions within an organisation and has therefore attracted considerable attention from academic writers (Gordon, 1992; Baker, 2006). This leads to many different definitions of corporate training. For example, field training, according to Gordon (1992), is the planned and systematic alteration of behaviour through events, activities, and learning programs that enable participants to achieve a level of specific knowledge, the skills, abilities, and knowledge required to do the job and work effectively. Rotation and job rotation (McCourt & Eldridge, 2003) as a means of developing employee skills within an organisation refer to the transfer of employees from one formal area of responsibility to

another formal position, for example, to a management position within an organisation and a branch or organisation to another company. In case of transfer, it may involve transferring employees from one company to another. These rotations and transfers allow employees to acquire skills that improve their performance within the organisation. The knowledge obtained from selected employees using this method is very useful to the organisation as it can increase the competitive advantage of the organisation.

Employee performance is often measured by results. However, this can also be considered from a behavioural perspective (Armstrong, 2000). Several parameters can be considered when measuring performance, such as productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and profitability (Ahuja, 1992), as briefly explained below. Profitability is the capacity to earn profits continuously over a period of time. It is expressed as the gross profit-to-sales ratio or capital relative to earnings (Wood & Stangster, 2002). Productivity and efficiency: efficiency is the ability to achieve desired results using as few resources as possible, while effectiveness is the employees' ability to achieve desired goals (Stoner, 1996). Productivity is expressed as the ratio between output and input (Stoner et al., 1995). It measures how well individuals, organisations, and industries convert resources into goods and services. Quality is the ability of a product or service to satisfy expressed or assumed needs.

Wright and Geroy (2001) point out that employee skills are developed through effective training programs. Therefore, it not only improves the employee's overall performance to perform the current job effectively

but also improves the employee's knowledge, skills, and attitudes for future work, which promotes the efficiency of the excellent operation of the organisation. Exercise has been shown to improve performance. This benefits both employees and the organisation by positively influencing employee performance by developing employee knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies, and behaviours (Harrison, 2000; Guest, 1997). In addition, there are other studies, such as Swart et al. (2005), which develop training to address skill and performance gaps and improve employee performance. According to Swart et al. (2005), eliminating the performance gap means implementing appropriate training initiatives aimed at developing specific skills and abilities of employees and improving work results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Influence of Training Policies on Employee Performance

The researcher sought to identify the effect of the influence of training policies on employee performance in the county government of Nyanduru. The response was categorised in ascending order on a scale of one (1) to five (5) with one (1) – does not apply at all, two (2) – applies few times, three (3) – applies half the times, four (4) – applies most of the times, and five (5) – applies always. The response was summarised using descriptive statistics, namely, mean (μ), mode, and standard deviation (σ). A mean value that is less than 3 depicts low frequency in the occurrence of the training policies aspect in question. On the other hand, a mean which is greater than 3 implies high frequency. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Training Policies on Employee Performance (n = 60)

Statements	Mean (μ)	Mode	Standard Deviation (σ)
Training lowers staff turnover, absenteeism, dissatisfaction, and discontent.	1.41	0	0.678
Promotional training that prioritises current employees boosts morale and increases productivity.	4.77	5	0.423
Investing in training, particularly management development, yields noticeable results.	4.73	5	0.423
As a tool that, among other things, secures and supports efficient succession training	4.81	5	0.423
Training boosts managerial capability, stimulates and helps retain	4.35	5	0.423

competent managers, and encourages managers to pursue professional advancement.			
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Source: Researcher (2023)

According to Table 1, it was established that training does lower staff turnover, absenteeism, dissatisfaction, and discontent, as shown by the majority of the respondents (Mode = 1) and a mean of $1.4 < 3$. According to a majority of the respondents (Mode = 5) and a mean of $4.77 > 3$, promotional training that prioritises current employees boosts morale and increases productivity. On the other hand, investing in training, particularly management development, yields noticeable results according to the mode of 5 and a mean of $4.73 > 3$. This is in line with Prince (2004), who postulates that organisations need skilled and productive workers to obtain and sustain competitive advantage, and for their capabilities to grow and be strengthened, these workers require career development. The majority of the respondents (Mode = 5), with a mean of $4.81 > 3$, observed that training is a tool that, among other things, secures and supports efficient succession training. Training boosts managerial capability, stimulates and helps retain competent managers, and encourages managers to pursue professional advancement according to the mode of 5 and a mean of $4.35 > 3$. This agrees with Golden (2004), who

asserts that good training initiatives boost workers' job happiness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: The study concludes that training policies have a positive influence on employee performance that is significant at the 5 per cent level of significance. This was clearly manifested in the fact that training lowers staff turnover, absenteeism, dissatisfaction, and discontent, as well as boosting morale and increasing productivity. Through training, organisations can attain management development, boosting managerial capability, stimulating and helping retain competent managers, and encouraging managers to pursue professional advancement.

Recommendation: The study recommends that the county government should ensure they establish sound training policies to equip employees with the adequate skill set and capacity to deliver quality services to the citizens. Training is also expected to motivate employees, thereby curbing staff turnover, absenteeism, dissatisfaction, and discontent, as well as increasing productivity.

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